

The INQUIRER 65p

The voice of British and Irish Unitarians and Free Christians Issue 7707 October 4 2008

Catching up with young people



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FDA song *

And we say:

"HEY! It's a wonderful FDA!"
Where we love to work and play
And get along with each other.

You gotta listen to your leader,
Follow all the rules,
Listen to your friends,
The jokes that you share.

Open up your mind,
Open up your heart,
Get together and make things better,
By singing together!

It's a simple message
And it's written on the wall,
Believe in yourself
And we'll make it through.

(* Excerpt - sung to the tune of 'Arthur'
from the children's television show)

Participants in 'Five Days Away', a holiday for Unitarian youth held at Great Hucklow, got to know each other in a parachute game. Photo by John Harley

Youth Activity Scrapbook



Senior Weekend teens participate in a candlelit meditation in May. Photo by James Barry



(left) Mountain walking was on the agenda at Five Days Away. Photo by John Harley

'On Yer Bike' (right) was the theme of a 'Blah' weekend at Alfriston Youth Hostel, 13-15 June. It was a weekend for 7-14 year olds packed full with mountain biking, wide games, swimming and chilling out. Blah has since become Uniteens – a youth initiative for Unitarians aged 12-17, which meets monthly on a Sunday afternoon at Unity Church, Islington – and Unikids. Unikids is the new name for youth weekends for 7-11-year-olds in the South. Of course, young 'Units' from all over the country are welcome to join. Contact John Harley for more information on youth programmes: jharley@unitarian.org.uk



Holiday made memories, friends

By Isabelle Rosenberg

Once again, I was very excited at the beginning of August to be going to FDA again. FDA stands for, 'Five Days Away' and is for 12-17 year olds and held at the Nightingale Unitarian Conference Centre at Great Hucklow. The theme of this year's FDA was, 'Our Whole Lives' (OWL), which is a programme from the American Unitarian Universalist Association, dealing with the issues surrounding sex and sexuality.

With the intention of leaving the house at 8 o'clock, I was awake bright eyed and bushy tailed (!) at 7. But sadly, I was distracted by the diving in the Olympics so it was half-past 9 by the time we finally set off. After a very uninteresting five-hour journey, we finally arrived in Hucklow. It was great to be back as I hadn't seen some people for a year! As there were some new people, we all went outside and played some games with a parachute. One of these games was swapping places with someone if you had something in common e.g. if you had a dog.

Every day we would have a 'session'. This was when we would do one or two of the activities that was in the OWL programme. In one session, we just had to say whether we agreed or disagreed with a statement. However, in another activity, we had to be split into younger and older age groups and the activities we did induced a lot of giggles of fun. At least, it did in the older group!

We were also put into Credo groups of six or seven members, based on our ages. In our group, we talked about how beautiful everyone is on the outside, and why we find it very hard to accept compliments but very easy to give them. I felt that we all need to be comfortable in our own skin and that there needs to be a balance of giving and receiving compliments.

Another big part of FDA was Circle Time. At the end of the day, we had some quiet time. Each of the Credo groups led a Circle Time session, as did the leaders. I thought our Circle Time was the best (not being biased of course!). We did ours about, 'hope and wishes' and even though it rained, we persevered and managed to light a bonfire! We all stood outside with candles and with our wishes on pieces of paper, and when we felt ready, we threw our pieces of paper into the fire.

We also went on a day of rock climbing and orienteering. I can't say it was my favourite bit of the week, but it was one of the more amusing moments. Although the laughter was mainly at my expense! I've found out that I'm not very good at climbing through small gaps and that I should never abseil again, as the first time I lost my footing and smacked into the rock and the second time I ended up hanging upside down (no, I don't know how I managed it either). We also had a walk, which, to my surprise, I actually enjoyed! I think it was the shop and the bus ride back to Hucklow that made it all the more enjoyable for me!!

On the last night of our stay, we had *Showtime*! This was when we were able to do some sort of entertainment for the rest of the 'FDAers'. We had singing, a game show, and a ghost story (which I did not enjoy). The contribution that my friends and I made was a song about what we had done during that week. I think the chorus of, 'HEY! what a wonderful FDA', explained how we all felt about the week.

I would just like to say a big thank-you to John Harley, Sarah Warhurst, Lorna Hill and Andrew Usher because, without them, the wonderful week we had would not have been possible. They all have an amazing amount of patience to put up with all of us and I don't think that we can thank them enough.

FDA is one of the events that I most look forward to all year, (I think my friends at school will be glad it's gone, as I was very excited in school). Well, that and senior weekend. The next senior weekend is in November and it will be great to see the people who didn't come to FDA!

FDA and Hucklow mean a lot to everyone there and we all understand how each other feels. I've made some amazing new friends while I've been there and I think the proof of this is that I had 300 free text messages at the beginning of the week following my return home, and four days later I had only 189 left – and I've only talked to people that were at FDA! I think that all teenagers should come, as it is an *amazing* experience that you get a lot out of. See you next year?

Isabelle Rosenberg, 15, lives in Porthcawl S. Wales.

Five Days' highlights

By Elizabeth Rosenberg

Rock climbing was extremely fun and at one part when we were climbing up quite steep rocks, my friend Maddie got her foot stuck she wiggled it but it wouldn't come out. Then she started shouting to the instructor that her foot was stuck and he kept quite calm but Maddie was still shouting. It was so funny but you kind of had to be there. Eventually, she did get it unstuck by pulling it backwards.

We watched a DVD called '*Camp*', which was quite good, and it is aimed at 12 year olds and above. It was very thought provoking about how to understand other people's dilemmas more easily.

Thursday was the Great Hucklow 'Well Dressing'. The 'Well Dressing' is when some people in the village make a beautiful picture and place it behind the well. There was also a blessing service, which was led by David Shaw. But the best thing of all on Thursday was *Showtime*. There was the 'Arthur girls' (Isabelle, Chani, Sally, Sammi) FDA song sung to the theme tune of 'Arthur' (The children's programme), which was amazing. There was the boys' game, 'Last Man Standing', which had everyone in stitches. Friday was our Bridging Ritual. Two people were leaving FDA because they will be too old to come back next summer. So, instead of having water over their hair like you have at your first time at FDA, they had to actually sit in the trough and get completely wet. After that, it was time to go home. I don't think I've hugged so many people in such a short space of time in my life.

I think I inherited my mum's map-reading skills because we got lost on the way home. My mum didn't know where we were on the map; just like when I didn't know where we were on the map when we went orienteering!!

Elizabeth Rosenberg, 12, lives in Porthcawl.

The INQUIRER

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Inquiring Words

Yom Kippur 8 October 2008

Forgive us that often we forgive ourselves so easily and others so hardly;

Forgive us that we expect perfection from those to whom we show none;

Forgive us for repelling people by the way we set a good example;

Forgive us the folly of trying to forgive a friend;

Forbid that we should use our little idea of goodness as a spear to wound those who are different;

Forbid that we should feel superior to others when we are only more shielded;

And may we encourage the secret struggle of every person.

– Vivian Pomeroy

From 'Singing the Living Tradition'

Editor's View

Youth programmes

I am always pleased to open the photographs that arrive after a youth event. You can nearly see the friendships growing in the images. And, even from a distance, you can experience the atmosphere of fun, of learning and of love. The programmes for young people offer fantastic opportunities for young Unitarians to create for themselves their own spiritual path, among relationships which could last their whole lives. (For evidence of that, consider the number of members of the Unitarian Young People's League who are still close, and who continue to be so active in the Unitarian movement.)

The leaders who give of their time and their creativity deserve credit and thanks. The work they do is some of the most important that takes place among Unitarians. In particular, the Rev John Harley (whose wonderful multi-generational presentation appears on page 6) has brought vision and vitality to the activities for young Unitarians. We are fortunate that he and all the people who work with him bring so much love to their task.

– MC Burns

Thank you

*This colour issue of The Inquirer was sponsored by
Howard and Gill Hague, members of Kensington
Unitarians.*

Unitarian Music Society dived right in

By Valerie Walker

Not aquatic choirs nor an orchestra afloat, but a brave, cheerful group of musically-inclined Unitarians (ages from 12 to well over 60) took the plunge, not just once but twice, in the open-air (unheated) pool at Ammerdown Retreat Centre near Radstock. It was the Unitarian Music Society's Annual Conference held over a long week-end at the end of August.

An interesting and varied programme was arranged with sessions to suit the experienced musician and the novice, and there was ample 'Free Time' so one could 'dip' in as inclined, not just for frolics in the swimming pool. So, individuals and groups could be found rehearsing, while others walked in the surrounding countryside or just sat in the beautiful garden chatting over tea, coffee or a glass of wine.

The centre is certainly in a secluded location, and many had a problem finding their way, but, once there, it proved to be a beautiful venue. Accommodation and food were superb, the staff friendly and helpful, there was ample space for various music groups to rehearse and a pleasant lounge with bar for relaxing at the end of each evening.

There was entertainment on Saturday and Sunday and the two evenings were loosely divided into 'fun' and 'serious'. Music was not the only entertainment. We were treated to humorous poems, short stories, Joyce Grenfell and Stanley Holloway monologues and the Rosenberg sisters getting everyone to sing – and do the actions for – 'Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes'....in Welsh! You were 'out' immediately if you made a mistake, which for most of us was quite quickly. The men's choir became a great 'Barber-Shop Eleven' and there were 'Songs from the Shows', a piano and saxophone jazz number and one of the centre's staff, a young Korean woman, played the piano beautifully for us. There was brilliant solo



Isabelle (on flute) and Elizabeth Rosenberg played for the Unitarian Music Society at the annual conference in August. Photo by Sue Teagle.

and ensemble music, too many beautiful performances to list individually but very enjoyable for the audience.

The Sunday morning 'scratch' performance of Vivaldi's *Gloria* was amazing. The eight-piece orchestra played with soloists Helen and Richard Merritt and Andrew Usher. David Dawson guided us through and it was incredibly satisfying to have taken part.

Most of us struggled with our co-ordination and short-term memory in the 'Kodaly Hand Signs' session! We joined in singing from the soon-to-be-published new hymnbook and then 'brainstormed' about the possibility of holding one-day workshops during the year to encourage others to enjoy 'music in worship' and discussed what activities we would like at future conferences. As we hope to meet over the August Bank Holiday week-end in the future (depending on the availability of accommodation), it was also agreed that, to avoid the busiest travel periods, it might be preferable to meet from Thursday to Sunday but to offer some flexibility and, when this is possible with the residential centre, the option to stay on until Monday.

With no nearby Unitarian Sunday service available, this year's programme was rearranged to include epilogues, which took place in the charming chapel at Ammerdown; thoughtful and meaningful conclusions to our musical days

As an indifferent Alto, I would not normally have the confidence to sing with a choir, but at this week-end no-one, however basic their skill, is made to feel unwanted or patronised. It is a great week-end break for anyone who enjoys music-making, or just listening; one of the most pleasant ways to spend a few days in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and it is nice to have an audience so non-singing, non-playing, partners or friends are always welcome and new attendees are made to feel at home immediately.

The dates for the next three years are already fixed, two at The Nightingale Centre and then, in 2011, we return to Ammerdown. Do think about joining us at Gt. Hucklow from 28-31 August 2009.

If you are interested in joining the Society, or coming to the next conference (open to non-members), contact Adrienne Wilson 01483 421905; adie@adiewilson.co.uk

Valerie Walker is a member of the Oxford congregation.

Global Chalice Lighting

The International Council of Unitarians and Universalists announces the 62nd in its monthly series of global chalice lighting readings. Every month, a reading is distributed to Unitarian and Universalist congregations around the world. Each congregation is asked to use the reading for one worship service in the designated month, identifying it as the 'Global Chalice Lighting' for that month and naming the group which submitted it. It is hoped that the ICUU Global Chalice Lighting Project will enhance the worship experience in our congregations and raise awareness of the international dimensions of our religious movement. This Global Chalice Lighting is to be used during October 2008.

Bless the work that we do,
And the silence that falls upon us,
And the joy that stirs within us.
And let praise rise to our lips
Naturally out of the fullness of our
hearts.

– Sheila Crosskey

British General Assembly of Unitarian and Free
Christian Churches

A profoundly simple yet difficult

An interactive address for all generations in which **John Harley** asks if we can put a value on our lives.

This address, first shared with the congregation of Meadow Chapel, was created for an all-age group in mind with opportunities for plenty of participation.

Some ideas for activities and practical advice are in italics. Feel free to cut and paste according to your needs – the main objective is to make the address a two-way form of communication rather than one solid monologue.

Has anyone here gone bananas? (*A few hands will go up and hopefully there will be a few nods.*) Later I'm going to tell you the story of a man who literally went bananas.

I want to start by asking you a simple question. What are you worth? If you go into the shops there are price labels everywhere – everything seems to have a price these days – so it should be easy – what are you worth?

There may be some raised eye-brows and responses... 'a million dollars', humans don't have price tag', 'I'm priceless', etc.

It's difficult, isn't it? There was a man in Australia who actually asked that exact question. He was fed up with his life so he decided to sell his whole life on eBay. He decided to sell everything – his house, car, mountain bike, even his barbeque! Also included was a two-week trial run at his job as a rug shop assistant and an introduction to his friends. His name was Ian Usher. After around 70 bids, someone offered him £192,000 – he said he was 'not disappointed' by the outcome. He now plans to go travelling with this money and start a new life.

But can a human life really have a price tag? Tragically, throughout history, people have been captured and sold as slaves in many parts of the world and, even in 2008, people are still enslaved, many of them children. 'Free the Slaves' claims that present day slaves have been sold for as little as £20 in Mali. We need to campaign to ban all kinds of slavery that still exist. Another challenge we face is to know how to value ourselves.

Rumi, the poet who lived over 800 years ago, wrote 'You know the value of every article of merchandise but if you don't know the value of your own soul, it's all foolishness'. I guess he's saying that if we cannot learn to know our own immense value as human beings nothing else really matters.

Walt Whitman, the American poet wrote:
Divine I am inside and out, and I make holy whatever I touch or am touch'd from,

*The scent of these armpits aroma finer than prayer
If I worship one thing more than another it shall be the spread
of my own body or any part of it – there is a lot of me and all so luscious'*

Whitman challenges us all to celebrate our bodies and our whole selves. Are you able to do this – do you truly know how precious you are? How often do you describe yourself as

luscious?

I'll never forget seeing a self-portrait in an art gallery by a boy called Kious Jones from Cavendish Primary School – next to the painting he had written 'I like my self-portrait because I did it and it's a masterpiece. That's why I like it'. Wow – I thought – that's healthy self-confidence! I wonder how the world we live in would be different if we could all learn to believe in ourselves and fully respect our huge abilities. Of course, it can take a whole life-time to find out what our talents are.

Let's share in some silence now. I'd like you to think of qualities you have that you value, things you like about yourself. Things about yourself that you want to celebrate.

In a moment, I'd like you to turn to someone sitting next to you and work with them for a few minutes. We're going to play a game of 'Affirmation Tennis'. Decide who goes first. Then, I want you to take it in turns to share something about yourself you value – or a gift you have that's special. You might say, 'I value my sense of humour' or 'I want to celebrate how I look after my friends' or 'I'm a good cook' etc. I wonder how many you can come up with – just be spontaneous – and you can be brave – no-one is going to be checking which qualities you said afterwards! Don't feel pressured by this – if nothing comes up, you can take a little silence or your partner can come up with suggestions.

Participants do this for around two minutes.

How did that feel? Did you find it easy or difficult? What was it like having someone listening to you voicing your gifts? If you found that a struggle what changes in your life might you need to make so that you are more aware of your talents?

How are you at seeing the value in other people?

(A central table should be prepared with a variety of apples arranged – if possible one apple for each person present. Any fruit can be used, though apples are particularly appropriate because their physical characteristics vary so much.)

Look at this table with lots of apples – they have different shapes and sizes and colours. In a moment, I'd like you to come up to the table and choose an apple. Choose one that you like the look of. It may be something about the pattern on its skin or its texture. You may even find that an apple chooses you!

(Participants go and visit the table and choose an apple and sit down with it).

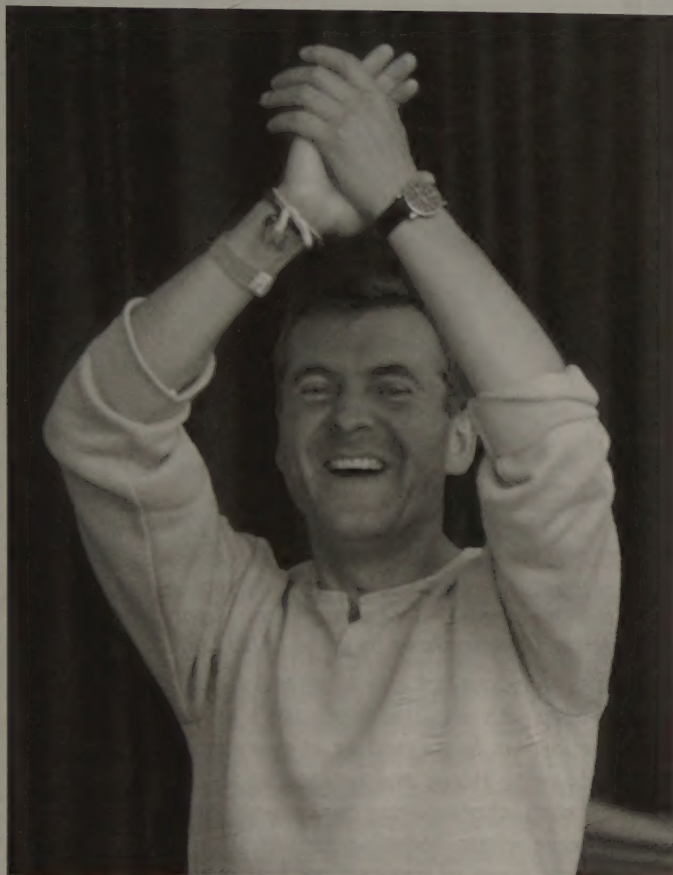
Let's now have some silence together to really get to know your apple! I want you to study every detail as if you are going to paint its portrait.

(Participants have a minute or so to look at their apple).

Now I want you to give your apple a name! This name could be connected with a certain characteristic it has. I'll give you a minute to think of a suitable name. Let's have some time to get to know these fine apples' names – you may like to explain why you chose this particular name.

(Participants hold up their apples one by one and introduce them. 'My apple is called Sunset because...' etc. Then when everyone has had a chance to introduce their apple a bag is passed around the group and participants are asked to place their apple in the bag. The leader then shakes the bag so that

Question: *What are you worth?*



John Harley dances at Summer School. In this exercise he asks, 'I wonder how the world we live in would be different if we could all learn to believe in ourselves and fully respect our huge abilities.' Photo by Ned Prideaux

the apples are mixed up).

Some of you may have guessed what is going to happen next! I'm going to place the apples back on the table. I'd like you to come up and find your apple – only pick it up if you know it's your apple without a doubt. If you can't spot your apple at first, then wait until more have been claimed.

(Participants search for their apple, are reunited with it and sit down. If any are unclaimed, they should be just left on the table).

What did that activity feel like? How easy was it to find your apple? Can you think of times in your life when you have similar feelings? Are all people the same? Can you think of any times when you have treated a whole group of people the same and then got into trouble? Have you experienced what it feels like when someone has muddled you up with someone else or times when you have been unclaimed or left behind?

(Participants share their experiences and reflections)

Sometimes we can forget to celebrate the diversity of human beings and we can be in too much of a hurry to notice each other's specialness. All of the world religions remind us to love and respect other people and all living things. This is sometimes called the 'golden rule'. The Bible states that you should '...love your neighbour as yourself'. Imam Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths states, 'None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself', and the

Buddhist text *Udana-Varga* advises us to 'hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful'. Is there someone you know you would like to practice the 'golden rule' with? How can we live our lives so that every human being is known and held in the same way as we treasured those apples?

Please take your apple away with you today. You may like to look after it like a new-found friend or you may just prefer to eat it!

See if you can practise that exercise with people you see every day. Pay attention to their uniqueness. Let's try not to put people in neat little boxes.

And lastly, how do we value the world we live in?

I was going to tell you about a man who literally went bananas. This is a true story about a man called Phil Calcott who went bananas because of a club card – you know those cards supermarkets give you and they give you points every time you buy stuff – it's their way of encouraging you to shop with them and not over the road.

Anyway, there was a supermarket in Worcester which was offering 25 points on your club card if you bought 1kg of bananas for £1.17. Now Phil was clearly good at maths because he realised that 25 points was worth £1.25 – so for every 1kg he bought he would make 8p profit. So he decided to buy two carloads of bananas – he accumulated 7,850 points on his club card. He made a nice little profit of £25.12. This put a smile on his face until he realised he had a whole load of bananas to get rid of. First he tried to sell them in the high street for a few pence – no one was interested – they thought he was a dodgy salesman – eventually he tried to give them away and people thought he was mad. In the end he had to throw all these bananas away. Mr Calcott made £25 but did he really know the real value of one single banana? *(At this point a banana can be held up).* Did he truly know the value of the people who harvested those bananas, and how much did he value his own time?

So what are the fruits of the earth worth? What is the true value of this beautiful world we live in? As we live our lives, are we fully aware of the value of the land we walk on, the smell of the sea air, the taste of bananas? Do you know the value of your loved ones? Do you know the value of your own body and soul?

How do you value your life? In her poem 'The Summer Day' Mary Oliver, the American poet, asks the question 'tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'

The Rev John Harley is Unitarian National Youth Coordinator.

York classical guitarist go give recital

On Saturday, 18 October, Alex McCartney, a 17-year-old student of classical guitar, will give a recital at York Unitarians in St. Saviourgate, York, at 7.30pm. Entry is free, with donations in aid of both The Press Guardian Angels Appeal and the St. Saviourgate Unitarian Chapel Fund gratefully received. All are welcome.

– Janet Eldred

First-timers enjoyed Heritage days

When the Newcastle-under-Lyme congregation decided to open for Heritage Days, they brought gardening tools in case no one came. But as **Louise Rogers** notes, they got an appreciative crowd.

The English Heritage and Civic Trust promoted Heritage Days were held from 11-14 September. We know that many Unitarian Meeting Houses and chapels participate but this was our first time. We hope that our experience will encourage others to get involved, as we found that there were many benefits, not least an excellent night's sleep at the end of it.

On the Heritage Open Days' website (www.heritageopendays.org), we are told 'Heritage Open Days celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission.'

Our local Civic Trust did the prompting and very low-key promotion of local activity, and it was the first time that we had been approached. Ours is quite a plain building, both inside and out, with some original features but many additions, with fixtures having been donated from other churches and chapels that closed. We certainly have a good story to tell. We are lucky to have a volunteer archivist who, whilst not being Unitarian, is very familiar with Unitarian history, having completed a history of another chapel.

She very kindly drew up a timeline for us from the building of the first Meeting House, through many incidents, such as its burning down and the building of our present Meeting House in 1717, to subsequent closures and re-openings, and the comings and goings of ministers. We then added entries to offer some national context such as the Act of Uniformity, the Toleration Act and the emergence of the General Assembly. We got a six-page document out of this and printed 10 copies.

We also had a history prepared by one of our ministers back in the 1920s and we made several copies of this. We cleared the cabinet that we normally use to display Fair Trade goods and put in some photos and old service sheets and an old minute book. And we used a small display board to pin up some photos and an account of the 1715 fire. We always display the posters of famous Unitarians at the back of the chapel.

On the day, we leisurely opened up and got the urn boiling. We decided to do a fairly simple poster for our notice board – which was made up of a range of coloured sheets of paper with 'Heritage Open Day. Today. 10am – 4 pm' emblazoned in black on white paper to stand out from the coloured background. We had also brought gardening things so that we might do something useful if no one turned up. We were still making the poster at 10 am when our first visitors arrived – it was a very Blue Peter moment with sticky-backed plastic and coloured paper all over the place.

After the first hour, we had to ask people not to take away the information sheets as we knew that we did not have enough



A tile of the Rev Robert Spears, who although never a minister of the Newcastle-under-Lyme chapel, supported its refurbishment in 1898, assisted by some of his London friends.

copies. At 4 pm. our last visitor left and we collapsed in an exhausted heap with our grins firmly stuck to our faces – having spent the last six hours smiling at everyone who was enjoying our Meeting House and soaking up its history – we now smiled at each other enjoying our success. And we did manage to plant some winter-flowering pansies.

Over the six hours of opening, we had more than 30 people through our doors. Each had been offered refreshments and some information about the Meeting House, had been shown some of the interesting features and told something of their history; and they were invited to sit and read information and to wander around the building. Our fabulous archivist was on hand to answer questions that the rest of us could not. On the Monday after, we sent out seven packs of information in the post and four emails. One person said that they would like to attend a service so we sent our calendar to them.

In the evening, a few of us travelled to Macclesfield King Edward Street Chapel for an inspiring Son et Lumiere which was presented by the whole congregation and showed the history of their lovely building and its congregation. What a great way to round off our historic day.

The benefits? We learnt a great deal about our own Meeting House and the history of dissenting religion. We met and talked with people about Unitarianism – they may not ever attend a service but at least they will know more about us. We showed off, not only our beloved building, but also our beloved congregation and our beloved minister.

Next year? We know we will need to do more advertising ourselves. We are considering doing a Friday midday opening to catch people in their lunchtimes, as we are close to the town centre. We will produce more information and may create a DVD so that people have something to watch and listen to.

If anyone would like further information or would like to share their ideas, please contact me on louise@staffordshire-unitarians.net

Louise Rogers is a member at Newcastle-under-Lyme.

History of trust reveals fine record

Considering the certainty of death...*The History of the Leonard Chamberlain Trust*

Book Review by Kate Taylor

Prudent investment, dedicated management, and a good deal of firmness (for example, in negotiating with the Charity Commission) has enabled the Leonard Chamberlain Trust to make grants in 2007 of more than £30,000, some of it very largely providing the stipend of the minister at Hull's Unitarian Church. In the past decade, too, the Trust has replaced some of its older almshouses in Sutton with six two-bedroomed bungalows, and replaced its Selby almshouses with another twelve bungalows. Its properties are handsomely designed, spacious, and tailored to the needs of the elderly, some of whom may well have mobility problems.

The Trust has a fine record.

Chamberlain (1642-1716), a Presbyterian dissenter, was a childless woollen draper who had property in Hull and Selby and in some smaller settlements in the same area. He attended the Bowl Alley Lane Chapel in Hull, which was built in 1691-2 largely at the expense of his sister-in-law, Anne Tomlin. His extensive will, made in 1716, speaks, in the style of the time, of setting his house in order whilst 'considering the certainty of death and uncertainty of the time and place and manner thereof'. He appointed four trustees and, after a number of bequests to individuals, left the bulk of his estate, in a variety of clauses, for the education or support of the poor and for the benefit of several dissenting ministers.

Today, there are still four trustees, all now drawn from the Unitarian congregation at Park Street, Hull, the descendant of the Bowl Alley Lane Chapel.

Bryan Burgess, who became a trustee in 1994 and who, as



Bryan Burgess

the chair from 1995-2007, piloted the Trust through a particularly critical period, has now written a history which describes the achievements of the trust and sets it in context.

Bryan's 62-page book, *The History of the Leonard Chamberlain Trust*, provides an account of Chamberlain's not uneventful life and of the persecution of nonconformity in his time. It relates the development of Unitarianism in Hull and the removal of the Unitarians from their original chapel to their new Gothic chapel in Park Street in 1881 and the building of its modern successor in 1976-7. He provides a full account of the history of the trust – or rather the parallel and also successive trusts stemming from Chamberlain's will, and of the role of earlier chairmen, as well as himself, in securing sensible revisions to the trust deeds as the circumstances and needs of the target beneficiaries changed over time.

The book includes the full text of Chamberlain's will (so long that it takes up 10 pages), and the inventory of Chamberlain's goods and chattels at his death.

This fascinating book reflects the commitment and care for detail of its author, who has in the past been a president of the Yorkshire Unitarian Union and, was for 15 years the chairman of the Park Street congregation. He is currently the chairman of the largest almshouse association in East Yorkshire, the Pickering and Ferens Homes, which has 1200 properties and employs a staff of 38.

But perhaps the greatest significance of the book is that it shows just how much good can be done by an individual who, considering the certainty of death, considers also how his fortune can best be deployed. For information on the book write to: fosteruk@fosteruk.karoo.co.uk

Kate Taylor is a member at Wakefield.



Prayer: Making space for the sacred

The Sacred in the Everyday
By the Rev Ant Howe

This space is sacred because of the faith, hopes, and dreams of those who went before us....

This time is sacred because we have set it apart for worship....

And we are sacred because we all bear the imprint of the divine.

Divine Spirit, who turns the ordinary into the sacred, be with us in the daily routine and in the mundane. Remind us again that you ask nothing of us except to "do justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with you our God" – a way of living that makes our very lives holy.

In the silence now we call to mind the times that we have failed to honour ourselves and others as sacred beings; the times when we have failed to treat the world as a sacred space; the times when we have neglected to look for the spirituality that can be found in the everyday...and we listen for the still small voice that encourages us to forgive ourselves and begin again.

Let us keep silence together....
(Silence)

*Life is precious and is a gift. The world is beautiful and we are privileged to live here
May we know this as truth. And what we know as truth, may we exhibit in our lives.*

Amen

The Rev Ant Howe is minister at Kingswood and at Warwick.

Summer School, a time to pause

Summer School 2008 was held in August at the Nightingale Unitarian Conference Centre at Great Hucklow. These are reflections three from participants. – ed.

Imagine...

Imagine a place where you receive a warm welcome and are immediately made to feel at home... a place where you have the opportunity to sing, dance, play with clay and paint and make mosaics, write and read poetry... a place where you can experience the spirituality which often we only talk about... a place where you find yourself in the company of others who are willing to have conversations about just any topic that you can think of. A place where men, women, children – all ages – live in community with one another. And... imagine a place where the women, men and children worship together, laugh and cry together and discuss – a place where your tears and fears are held gently and not criticised or judged. A place where you are valued and where you are encouraged to have confidence in the gifts that you have to offer this and the wider community.

Imagine a place where 50 people gather every morning (willingly and with eager anticipation!!) to listen to the thoughts, musings and deeply held beliefs of committed Unitarians who are willing to share their experiences and who welcome and take part in the debate which their words engender. Imagine a place where the pass option is always an option, where no-one is expected to be or do anything which they are not comfortable with but also, imagine a place where people achieve things which they could only ever dream of. To this mix, add a magical setting in the Peak District, where the wind through the trees, sunlit fields, the clean smell of rain, the song of the birds and the gentle cry of animals in the fields provides a magical backdrop.....where the vagaries of the weather do not matter and where the stars really are brighter.

Imagine all of this (I haven't even mentioned the food which is plentiful, nourishing and homely) and you will begin to get a picture of a week at Summer School. If you have never been to Summer School, do think about coming next year – your life will be richer for the experience!

– Stephanie Ramage

Timeless Moments

'If you came this way, Taking the route you would be likely to take, From the place you would be likely to come from...' is how T.S. Eliot described his pilgrim approach to 'Little Gidding', reminding me of the quiet, stone-wall lined Derbyshire lanes that lead to Hucklow. T.S. Eliot sought the past, a memory of the need of humans to seek spiritual depth in retreat; Summer School offers the 'real deal' now; breaking spiritual news – the meeting of individuals who recognise their own need for an encounter with the divine OTHER and dare to risk their solipsism in community.

But what company! I'm a novice to Summer School, but not to religious retreats; I know about the emotional turmoil these gatherings engender in me; the tension between my individuality and the demands of the collective. So, to be in community for a week with people of such diversity and openness, but where the spiritual intensity was not compromised, was a revelation. To have my limitations, my defences, my doubts, my need for safety, challenged in such a gathering of others so lovingly open about their own fears, was some experience.

Like all of us who chose the dance workshop for the week, the challenge was not just of words and ideas, but of our bodies moving; expressing, interacting as couples, moving in communion and separately. Dawn Buckle and Maggie Davies gently facilitated a connection to the latent creativity in our own bodies, but then took us much further as we choreographed our own dances; performing and appreciating each other's work. We all felt apprehensive at moving beyond our individual comfort zones; but with their sensitive encouragement and the wonderful supportive ethos of the group, we were able to achieve much more than any of us had thought possible.

The week's workshop culminated in a group choreography exploring the 'Big Bang' – the beginning of the Universe. As we expressed the dance of elemental particles: undifferentiated, separate and alone, partnered with another and finally coming together in a beautiful finale of collective harmony, we found ourselves (to my surprise) discovering a 'Language of Faith'; the theme of the Summer School this year. As the dance ended, the profundity of what we had made resonated within each of us – we had created a community and a language; for a moment everything made sense – all was well. It was one of the 'timeless moments'.

– Robert Oulton

Educational, Spiritual and Fun!

Hucklow Summer School takes place at the Nightingale Centre in August each year. There were 50 participants; some were regular attendees; for 17 participants, this was their first experience of Summer School. Each day began with a guided meditation and ended with participants walking in procession from the Nightingale Centre to the Old Chapel, in silence, carrying lanterns for evening epilogue. The epilogue was a very special – magical – part of the day.

The theme for this year's event was "Reclaiming the Language of Faith". The question of whether Unitarians need to reclaim words such as God, Faith, Prayer, etc. was addressed by five speakers over the week. I had to agree with the speaker who said that when a person is in pain or on the point of death, words such as "we acknowledge the inherent worth of each individual..." have little comfort to offer. We do need a language of faith.

As well as the Theme Talks, there were daily workshops. Over six days, we explored religion using either poetry, art or dance. The workshops were very well led and the experience was valuable. Afternoons and evenings offered one-off workshops in art, massage, writing, chanting, meditation, etc... It was difficult to make a choice as all of the workshops were interesting and well run.

I found the week to be a really great experience; very special and worthwhile. It was educational, it was a very spiritual experience, it enabled me to make contacts with other Unitarians and it was also great fun. The organisers of the summer school are anxious to ensure that the event does not simply become a meeting place for a few regulars – they offer an especially warm invitation to newcomers. My advice is, that if it is at all possible, take up that invitation. See you at Summer School 2009.

– Bridget Spain

Chalice Awards at Summer School



Children awarded the Bronze Chalice Award. Back row: Eloise Williamson, Claire Maddocks, Dawn Buckle, Sarah Tinker Front Row: Sophie Illingworth, Lauren Prideaux, Xaymca Gordon. Photo by Jim Blair

By Dawn Buckle and Claire Maddocks

Lauren, from Wakefield, Xaymca from Birmingham and Sophie from London soon got to know each other at Hucklow Summer School this year. The children's programme was led, for the first time, by Claire Maddocks and Eloise Williamson and a fine job they made of it. Both Claire and Eloise are graduates of the GA's National Youth Programme and have trained with Youth Coordinator the Rev John Harley to become Unitarian Youth Leaders.

Claire and Eloise planned activities for the children 'which reflected their Unitarian faith, and showed the children a purpose'. They used the Chalice Award Scheme, Bronze Award covering modules on Earth Education, Global Citizenship, Personal Profiles, and Popular Culture. The children discussed and debated such issues as the advantages and disadvantages of school uniform; they drew pictures and made collages to show concerns about pollution, created self-portraits with many arms and legs indicating their interests. They wrote a Friendship recipe that was transformed into a chalice-lighting and shared with the adults at Summer School during morning devotions. As Claire says, 'The way the programme fitted around the adults was great ... it demonstrated to the children that their programme was not a stand-alone workshop.' Adults

were also involved in a collection for the children's chosen charity, the NSPCC, for which the girls decorated attractive 'Penny Tubbies', from which they raised £40.

A display of all the work Lauren, Xaymca and Sophie produced grew as the week progressed, enabling the adults to appreciate their talents and hard work. Parents reported that the programme was well organised and run and was exactly what they would have wanted for their children. A couple of the parents decided to take back the Chalice Award to their congregations to run with their Sunday School children.

As if this wasn't enough, the children also participated with the adults in Summer School's morning devotions and evening epilogue, during which they acted out many characters provided props, the boxes which they had designed and made, for example, and read and sang beautifully. They were also part of afternoon workshops which naturally became, with their presence, 'intergenerational.' It was a pleasure to have three such bright and lively Young Unitarian People at Summer School with a programme so ably led by Claire and Eloise.

On the last day, the Chair of the Education and Training Commission, Dawn Buckle presented all of them with Chalice Award Bronze Certificates. Most appropriately, she was introduced by the Rev Sarah Tinker, Minister of the Week, who, when she was the GA's Education and Youth Officer, played a major role in compiling the Chalice Award Scheme.



Summer School walkers Barry Bell, Dawn Buckle, Doris Campbell, Andrew Usher, Jim Blair, Anne Barwell, Kathleen Bright and Stephanie Cage at the Tideswell Gorge. Photo by Caroline Blair



Almost all the 50 people present for Summer School. Photo by Ned Prideaux

Prayer for the Earth

Composed by children at Summer School

Wars are happening in our world,
Which are affecting every boy and girl,
Cars are travelling far too fast,
Which are giving out much more gas,
The gas is melting all the ice,
This is something not very nice,
People are chopping down all our trees,
Very soon we won't be able to breathe,
Animals are endangered because of us,
Every man should think about what he does,
Please help us protect our precious Earth,
For us and every future birth.
Amen

Longest scarf in Padiham helps homeless



Blankets to be distributed soon

Finally, after several months of the Rev Jean McNeile asking members and friends of Nazareth Unitarian Chapel to knit squares of wool to make the 'longest scarf in Padiham', the squares were stitched together and the town mayors gathered to attend a service of in aid of Lifeshare. Bernie Vose, a representative of the charity, spoke of the work that they do with homeless people in Manchester. The squares are now to be turned into warm blankets which Lifeshare will distribute.

Photo by Tony Braithwaite

Dame Vera honours Ditchling land girls



Dame Vera Lynn was the very special guest of Ditchling congregation's weekly social club. She presented four Ditchling residents with certificates recognising their efforts as girls in the Land Army. Dame Vera, who is now 91, was to present the badges issued by the government, but despite many promises, these didn't arrive on time with the comment from somebody 'After 60 years of waiting for the government, we are not surprised!' Fifty people heard from Dame Vera about the importance of the Land Army. A war-time tea followed, featuring corned-beef sandwiches and spam fritters! The congregation started the club when another local social event closed down. It is a great outreach tool. Some of the club members now come to Sunday services. Photos by James Barry



Edwardians return to Doncaster Church

Guests at Doncaster Unitarian and Free Christian Church were recently treated to a trip back in time. The annual Edwardian afternoon brings back life as it would have been around the time the first foundation stones of the present building were laid. Professional musicians Basil and Josephine Copley (left) entertained visitors with music hall songs, aided by Lay Person in Charge, Andrew Usher, and, congregation member, Stephanie Cage, while the Junior Church and other congregation members worked hard to keep up with demand for cream teas.